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ABSTRACT

In 1995, the three colleges in California's Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) surveyed 6,151 former students from 1993-94 to gather information on student outcomes and characteristics. This report presents Volume II of the survey results, providing four brief analyses of the responses presented in Volume I. The first report provides a profile of former students and their satisfaction with LRCCD, focusing on the relationships between student characteristics and choice of an occupational or general education program, program completion, dropout behavior, and levels of satisfaction with their educational experience at the District. The second report presents a profile of former LRCCD students who continued their education after leaving a District college, outlining the demographic characteristics of those who chose to continue their education and summarizing their opinions regarding the preparation they received at their college. The third report presents a demographic portrait of former students who were employed, summarizing their opinions regarding the usefulness of their education in performing their jobs and their salaries and wages. The final report examines differences in responses by non-returning students and by degree and certificate earners, summarizes the demography of the survey population, and compares respondent characteristics to the entire 1993-94 former student population. (HAA)

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ED 403 973

A Profile of Former Students and Their Satisfaction with Los Rios Community College District

Measures of Progress: 1995 Student Follow-Up

Results of a Survey of 1993-1994 Graduates and Non-Returning Students
Volume II, Reports 1-4

Judith A. Beachler

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Los Rios Community College District
Office of Planning and Research

A PROFILE OF FORMER STUDENTS AND THEIR SATISFACTION WITH LRCCD

MEASURES OF PROGRESS: 1995 PROJECT FOLLOW-UP
RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF 1993-94 GRADUATES AND NON-RETURNING STUDENTS

Report #1, Volume II
May 1996

From the Spring through the early Summer of 1995 the Los Rios Community College District conducted its biennial student follow-up survey, the eighth in a series that now covers a span of twelve years. During this twelve year period, data were generated from the responses of over 17,000 former students. After adjusting for undeliverable mail, the 1995 survey population included 6,151 former students who had attended one of the district's three colleges -- American River College (ARC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), and Sacramento City College (SCC) during the 1993-94 academic year. Questionnaires were sent to all degree and certificate earners (including those from summer session) and to a stratified random sample of non-returning students who had not graduated. Non-returning students were stratified by college; within each college they were stratified by gender and ethnicity. Responses from 2,389 individuals (for a rate of return of 38.8%) have been analyzed in an effort to answer the following questions of interest in educational planning:

- What happens to our students after they leave their Los Rios college? Were their educational goals completed? If not, why did they leave? Did the program and services offered by the colleges meet their individual educational needs? Do they plan to return to Los Rios in the future?
- What is their current educational status? Are they continuing their education elsewhere? Do they feel well prepared to do so?
- Are they employed? Where are they working and how much do they earn? Are they working in fields related to their college educational programs? Do they feel well prepared for employment?

Volume I of this study described the former student population and their responses to the survey questions. Data were generated at the district, college and academic program levels.

Volume II of this study is a series of short reports that provide more detailed analysis of data provided by survey respondents. These reports summarize the characteristics of specific student groups and the influence these characteristics have on: (1) the levels of overall satisfaction with their Los Rios college education; (2) their opinions regarding the usefulness of their education in preparing them to transfer to other colleges and universities; and (3) their opinions regarding the relevancy of their education in performing their jobs, with a complementary review of salary and wage data provided by former students. A fourth report summarizes the survey returns by non-returning students and by degree and certificate earners. It also summarizes the demography of the survey population and compares it to the 1993-94 former student population from which it was drawn.

This report reviews: why students attended a Los Rios college; who majored in general education and occupational education; which students complete programs earning degrees and certificates; why non-returning students chose not to return to their Los Rios college; and how satisfied former students are with their overall educational experience at Los Rios.

Why Did Students Attend a Los Rios College?

The reported primary objective for attending a Los Rios college has changed considerably over time. University transfer was the primary objective of only 29% of former students responding to the survey in 1984. The proportion of respondents whose primary objective was transfer increased to 42% when the 1989 survey was conducted, to 43% in 1991 and to 46% in 1995, while the proportion of respondents whose primary objective was career or job related decreased through 1989. Clearly, university transfer continues to be the major objective of the greatest number of Los Rios students. Table 1 shows the change in primary objective of students who have responded to the survey over time. By 1995, university transfer and career/job-related reasons became the primary objectives of 7% more Los Rios students than was the case in 1989.

Table 1
Respondents' Primary Objective at Their Los Rios College: 1985, 1989 and 1995

	1985	1989	1995
	N= 2,027	2,322	2,389
Primary Objective			
University Transfer	29.2%	42.2%	45.8%
Career/Job Related	61.5%	40.1%	43.4%
Other*	9.3%	17.7%	10.8%

*Skill improvement (non-job related), personal interest, other.

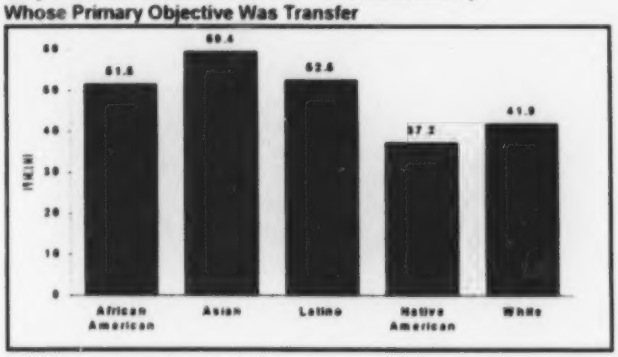
There is a significant relationship between reasons for attending a Los Rios college and age. Older students tend to have different objectives when they attend Los Rios colleges than younger students. Significantly more older students (55% of those age 30 to 39 and 62% of those 40 and over) attend for career and job-related reasons, while significantly more younger students (69% of those ages 16 to 20 and 72% of those ages 21 to 24) attend for the purpose of transfer. Students from the age of 25 to 29 are more evenly split between these two primary objectives; 44% attend for career and job-related reasons, while 48% attend with an intent to transfer.

The primary objective for attending a Los Rios college did not vary much by gender. Approximately 45% of female students attended for career and job-related reasons and 44% attended with the intent to transfer. Approximately 41% of the male students attended for career and job-related reasons; slightly more (48%) men than women attended with the intent to transfer.

There is a significant relationship between students' primary objective and ethnicity. More students of Asian descent (59%) state that transfer was their primary goal or objective than is the case for white students (42%) and all other ethnic minority students (50%).

Slightly more minority students of *each* ethnic group except Native Americans attended their Los Rios college with transfer as their primary objective than did white students, as indicated by Chart 1.

Chart 1
Proportion of Former Students in Each Ethnic Group Whose Primary Objective Was Transfer



Approximately 47% of white students responding to the survey attended for career and job-related reasons, while only 43% of Latinos, 38% of African Americans and 29% of Asians did. Approximately 54% of Native American students attended for career and job-related reasons.

Seventy-one percent of all students who stated that transfer was their primary goal/objective are currently enrolled at another college or university, with the majority (67%) enrolled at CSU.

Who Majored in Occupational Education and General Programs?

Slightly more than half of all respondents to the 1995 survey majored in occupational education programs. This holds true across all ethnic groups with the exception of Latinos. Almost 55% of the Latino respondents matriculated through general programs rather than occupational education programs.

Women were equally divided between occupational education and general programs while more than half of the men (55%) were enrolled in occupational education programs.

More older students tend to major in occupational education programs than do younger students. Whereas only 34% of the students ages 20 and younger and 40% of students 21 to 24 majored in occupational education programs, 54%, 60% and 62% of those age 25-29, age 30-39 and age 40 and over, respectively, did. Moreover, only one-third of the respondents were 24 years of age or younger.

As might be expected, there is a significant relationship between the primary objective for enrollment and program of study. Significantly more occupational education majors enrolled for career and job-related reasons than did general program majors. Similarly, students who selected general programs as their major tended to also select transfer to a four-year college or university as their primary objective.

Which Students Completed Programs of Study Earning Degrees and Certificates?

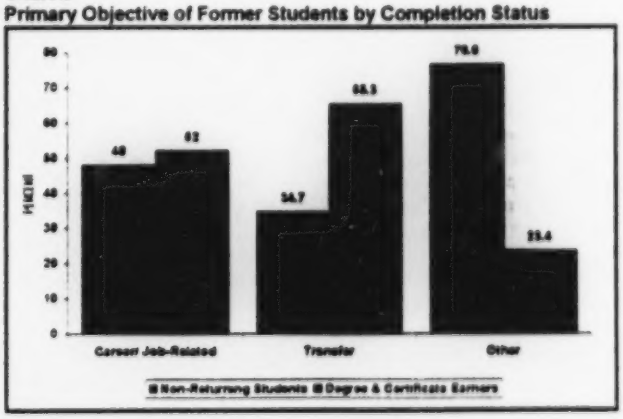
More than half of all respondents were graduates (former students who received a degree or certificate). This holds true across all ethnic groups with the exception of Asians: only 46.8% of the respondents who are Asian earned a degree or certificate, while 53.2% were non-returners.

There is a significant relationship between program completion and age. Older respondents tend to complete their programs of study in larger numbers than younger students. Slightly more than one-fourth of the respondents who were 20 years or younger received degrees and certificates, while more than half of the respondents in the three age categories between 21 and 39 had: 62% of 21-24 year-olds; 55% of 25-29 year-olds; and 62% of 30-39 year-olds. Half of the respondents age 40 and over earned degrees and certificates.

And as further suggested in Report #2 of this series, of those students who transferred to CSU and UC, significantly fewer of the youngest age group took the time to complete their degrees before transferring. Whereas 70% or more students who reported transferring to CSU and UC in all age categories above 16 to 20 completed their degrees or certificates before transferring, only 35% of the 16-20 year-olds did.

There is a significant relationship between completion status and a student's primary objective. Students who selected transfer as their primary objective tend to earn degrees and certificates in larger numbers than those who enrolled for career/job related or other reasons. Approximately 65% of those who enrolled with the intent of transferring actually earned their degree or certificate, while only 52% of those who enrolled for career or job-related reasons actually earned their degree or certificate, as indicated in Chart 2.

Chart 2
Primary Objective of Former Students by Completion Status



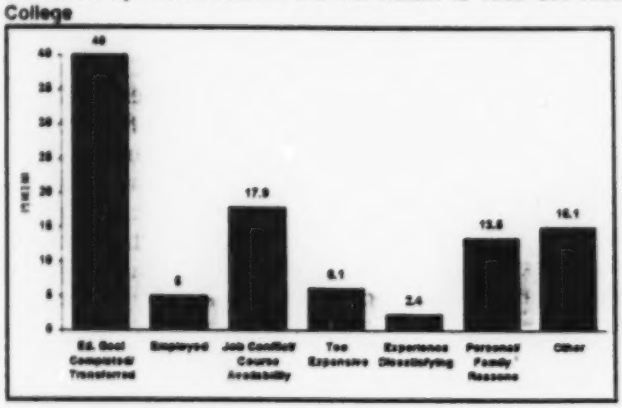
Occupational education majors tend to complete their programs of study at about the same rate as those majoring in general education. Approximately 55% of both groups were degree and certificate earners, while 45% of each group were non-returning students.

Male respondents were divided equally between graduates and non-returning students. More women tend to earn their degree or certificate (57.4% graduates vs. 42.6% non-returners).

Why Did Students Who Did Not Earn a Degree or Certificate Decide Not to Return to Their Los Rios College?

The highest proportion of non-returning students (40%) stated that they had either completed their desired courses or transferred to another college/university. Only 2% did not return because they were dissatisfied with either the quality of instruction or course content. Almost 14% did not return for personal or family reasons, while 6% said that college was too expensive.

Chart 3
Reasons Why Non-Graduates Did Not Return to Their Los Rios College



As implied in Chart 3 above, a considerable number of the survey respondents (18%) said that job hour conflict or course availability was the primary reason they did not return. Moreover, a considerable number of students took time to add comments after completing the survey, suggesting that more evening and weekend courses would be desirable. The three Los Rios colleges may wish to consider expanding course offerings at non-traditional times to meet the needs of these students and other working adults interested in becoming Los Rios students.

When analyzed by age, ethnicity and gender there is, however, some interesting variation in reasons students did not return. Larger numbers of younger non-returning students indicated they had completed their educational goals or transferred than did older students. Slightly more than half of those 24 and younger had, whereas only 40% of those 25 to 29, 33% of those 30 to 39 and 30% of those 40 and over had. Conversely, larger numbers (22%) of students in each of the three oldest age categories did not return because of job hour conflicts and course availability, vs. only 6% of students 16 to 20 and 14% of those 21 to 24.

Although on the whole, fewer Asian students completed their degrees and certificates than former students of other ethnic groups, more of the non-returning students who are Asian stated that they *had* completed their

educational goals or transferred. Almost 52% of non-returning Asian students completed their goal or transferred. Conversely, only one-third of African Americans and Native Americans had and 36% of Latinos and 38% of whites had. Fewer Asian students (14%) did not return because of job conflicts and course availability; 18% or more of each other ethnic group did not return for these reasons. Both African Americans and Latino (approximately 10% of each group) indicated that college was too expensive vs. about 5% of each other ethnic group.

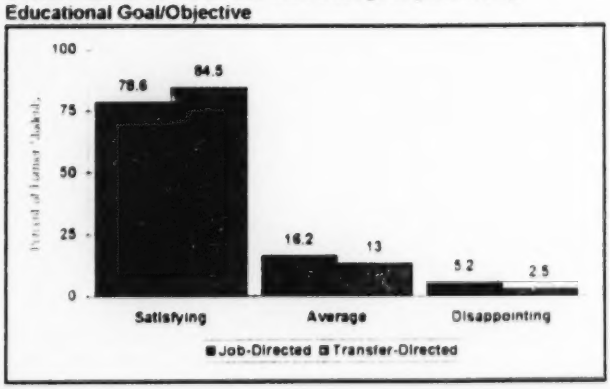
Fewer women who did not return stated that they had completed their educational goal or transferred than men (35% vs. 48%). As might be expected, more women did not return due to personal and family reasons (17% women vs. 8% of the non-returning men).

Were Former Los Rios Students Satisfied with Their Educational Experience?

Overall satisfaction with the educational experience at Los Rios colleges was high. On a scale of one to five, where five equals "very satisfied" and one equals "very disappointed," the average student rating was 4.08. Approximately 52% of the respondents were satisfied, 28% were very satisfied and 15% suggested that their education was average. Only 5% were disappointed with their educational experience at the Los Rios college of attendance.

Although *most* students evaluated their educational experience as satisfying, more students whose primary objective was transfer tended to be satisfied than those whose primary objective was career or job-related, as indicated by Chart 4. Whereas 85% of the transfer-directed students were satisfied or very satisfied, 79% of the job-directed students were. And slightly more job-directed students evaluated their satisfaction as only average or as disappointing than those who were transfer-directed.

Chart 4
Overall Satisfaction with Los Rios College Experience by Educational Goal/Objective



A similar finding exists for those former students who *completed* their objective. Significantly more students who fully completed their primary objective were satisfied than those who had not. Approximately 89% of the students who fully completed their objective were either satisfied or very satisfied, whereas only 77% of those who had partially completed their objective and only 55% of those who had not completed their objective were.

Both occupational education and general program majors tended to be equally satisfied with their Los Rios experience, at 82% and 81%, respectively.

Female and male students were equally satisfied with their educational experience: 81% of both groups of students were either satisfied or very satisfied.

More older students (particularly those age 25 and older) tended to be satisfied or very satisfied with their Los Rios college experience. Whereas only 70.5% of the traditional college-going population (students up to 20 years of age) were either satisfied or very satisfied, 80% or more students in all other age categories were.

A significant relationship exists between overall satisfaction and ethnicity. More former Asian students rated their satisfaction level as average or disappointed than is true for white students or students of other ethnic minority groups. Whereas only 17% of all former students (excluding Asians) rated their overall satisfaction as either average, disappointing or very disappointing, 27% of former Asian students did.

Finally, a large majority of non-returning students suggested that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their Los Rios college experience. But as to be expected, a smaller proportion of non-returning students were satisfied than was the case for degree and certificate earners.; 7% of non-returning students were disappointed, 19% stated that their level of satisfaction was only average and 74% were satisfied or very satisfied. Approximately 87% of all degree and certificate earners were satisfied or very satisfied.

Technical Note: When "significant relationships" are noted in the text of this report, the Chi Square Test for Independence was used. In all reported instances relationships are statistically significant at the .001 level. Therefore, there is an extremely high probability that significant relationships represent true relationships between variables in the former student population and are not the result of sampling error. Other proportions reported in this study cannot necessarily be generalized to the entire 1993-94 former student population. They are however, representative of the 38.8% who responded to the survey.

This report was written by Judith Beechler and is based on research conducted by the 1995 Project Follow-up staff: research design, analysis and report writing – Judith Beechler, Research Analyst; research design, computer programming, database development and management – Jose Pegalunan, former Programmer Analyst; coordination of return mail processes, data entry and production of Volume I reports – Verna Puglisi, Secretary. Questions regarding this project should be directed to the LRCCD Office of Planning and Research, Carol R. McKenzie, Ph.D., Director. 916-563-3247 or e-mail - puglisv@mail.do.losrios.cc.ca.us

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A PROFILE OF FORMER LRCCD STUDENTS WHO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION

MEASURES OF PROGRESS: 1995 PROJECT FOLLOW-UP
RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF 1993-94 GRADUATES AND NON-RETURNING STUDENTS

Report #2, Volume II

June 1996

From the Spring through the early Summer of 1995 the Los Rios Community College District conducted its biennial student follow-up survey, the eighth in a series that now covers a span of twelve years. During this twelve year period, data were generated from the responses of over 17,000 former students. After adjusting for undeliverable mail, the 1995 survey population included 6,151 former students who had attended one of the district's three colleges -- American River College (ARC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), and Sacramento City College (SCC) during the 1993-94 academic year. Questionnaires were sent to all degree and certificate earners (including those from summer session) and to a stratified random sample of non-returning students who had not graduated. Non-returning students were stratified by college; within each college they were stratified by gender and ethnicity. Responses from 2,389 individuals (for a rate of return of 38.8%) have been analyzed in an effort to answer the following questions of interest in educational planning:

- What happens to our students after they leave their Los Rios college? Were their educational goals completed? If not, why did they leave? Did the program and services offered by the colleges meet their individual educational needs? Do they plan to return to Los Rios in the future?

- What is their current educational status? Are they continuing their education elsewhere? Do they feel well prepared to do so?

- Are they employed? Where are they working and how much do they earn? Are they working in fields related to their college educational programs? Do they feel well prepared for employment?

Volume I of this study described the former student population and their responses to the survey questions. Data were generated at the district, college and academic program levels.

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The following report reviews the current educational status of former students, outlines the demographic characteristics of those who chose to go on to further their education and summarizes their opinions about how adequately prepared they were to do so.

HOW MANY STUDENTS ENROLL IN OTHER COLLEGES AFTER LEAVING LOS RIOS AND WHERE DO THEY GO?

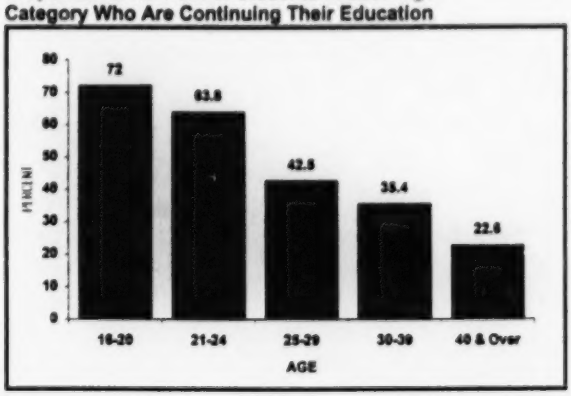
Almost half (44%) of the former Los Rios college students surveyed are enrolled in another college or university.

Of those who are enrolled, 12% are attending another Los Rios college, while 6% transferred to another California community college. Almost 47% are enrolled at California State University (CSU) in Sacramento, while 10% are enrolled at other CSU campuses. The University of California (UC) at Davis is the transfer institution of 7%, and 4% transferred to other UC campuses. Almost 9% transferred to private colleges, universities and schools in California, while 6% transferred to out-of-state colleges and universities.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF STUDENTS WHO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION

There is a significant relationship between continued education and the ages of former students. As might be expected, younger students tend to continue their education in larger numbers than older students, as indicated by Chart 1.

Chart 1
Proportion of All Former Students in Each Age Category Who Are Continuing Their Education



Of those students who did continue their education, significantly larger proportions of older students are attending community colleges than those in the younger age groups. Whereas only 13% of the 16 to 20 year-olds and 8% of the 21 to 24 year-olds continued their education at community colleges, 20% of those 25-29 years of age, 24% of those 30-39, and 38% of those 40 and older did.

Of those students who transferred to CSU and UC, significantly fewer of the youngest age group took the time to complete their degrees before transferring. Whereas 70% or more students who reported transferring to CSU and UC in all age categories above 16 to 20 completed their degrees or certificates *before* transferring, only 35% of the 16-20 year-olds did.

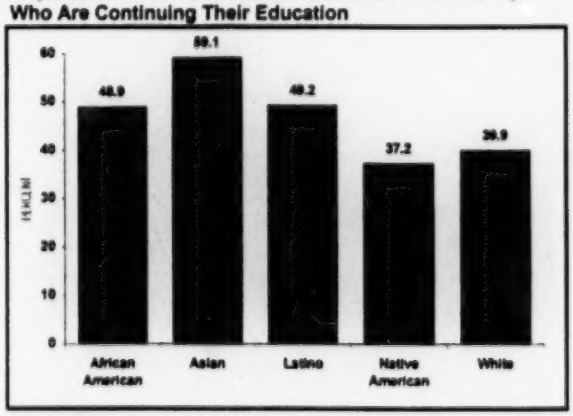
UC was the destination of more students who are 16-20 years of age than students of any other age group; 22% of the former students in this age group transferred to UC, while 11% or less of those in all other age groups transferred to UC campuses. Former students who are ages 21-24 are attending CSU campuses in the highest proportions; slightly more than 70% transferred there, whereas 54% or less of those in all other age groups were students on CSU campuses.

Of the women who continued their education, 20% are attending other community colleges, and 65% are attending CSU and UC campuses. This contrasts with men who have left a Los Rios college: only 14% are attending a community college, while 71% have gone on to CSU and UC campuses.

Although proportionally more men are attending four-year public universities than other types of institutions after leaving Los Rios, a higher proportion of *all* students who continued their education are women: 63% vs. 37% of the former students surveyed. It is important to note, however, that the rate of response by women was higher than by men, so this cannot necessarily be generalized to the *entire* former student population. It is, however, representative of the 38.8% who responded to the survey.

There is a significant relationship between ethnicity and continued education. Proportionally, Asian students continue their education after leaving Los Rios in larger numbers than any other ethnic group, while Native American and white students have the lowest continuation rate, as indicated by Chart 2.

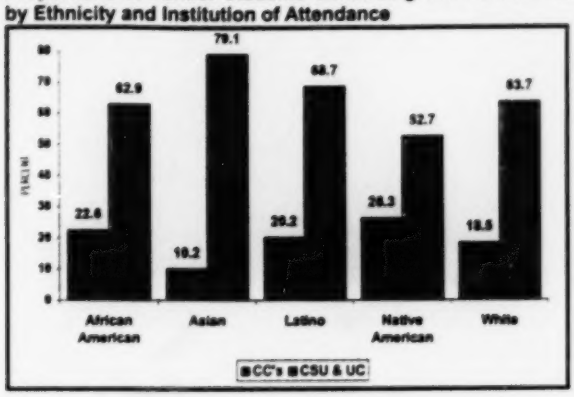
Chart 2
Proportion of All Former Students in Each Ethnic Group Who Are Continuing Their Education



In addition, as a proportion of all students who do continue their education, more Asians attend CSU

and UC campuses than community colleges and all other institutions of higher education. Chart 3 outlines attendance by ethnicity at public institutions of higher education in California. The proportion that is not represented on this chart is composed of all other types of colleges and universities attended by former Los Rios students.

Chart 3
Proportions of Former Students Continuing Their Education by Ethnicity and Institution of Attendance



THE LOS RIOS GOALS OF FORMER STUDENTS WHO ARE CONTINUING THEIR EDUCATION

There is a significant relationship between student goal at Los Rios and continued education. Survey respondents who stated that transfer was their primary goal or objective while in attendance at a Los Rios college have continued their education in larger numbers than those former students with other goals. Almost 71% of the former students whose goal it was to transfer were attending some college or university. Only 20% of the students whose primary goal/objective was career or job-related have continued their education.

Of those students with career and job-related objectives who *did* continue their education, 50% are at community colleges and 27% are at CSU and UC campuses; the remainder are attending other types of colleges and universities both within California and out-of-state. Approximately 79% of those students with transfer as their primary objective are attending CSU or UC campuses; only 8% are attending community colleges.

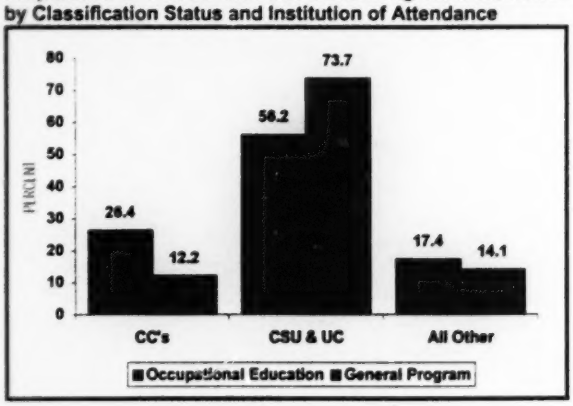
CLASSIFICATION STATUS OF FORMER STUDENTS WHO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION

As expected, former students who majored in General Programs continue their education in larger proportions than Occupational Education Program majors. Slightly more than 56% of General Program students continue their education, while slightly less than one-third of Occupational Education students continue theirs.

There is a significant relationship between classification status and where a student continues his or her education. General Program majors tend to matriculate at CSU and UC campuses in larger numbers than Occupational Education Program majors.

Chart 4 shows the proportions of students who continue their education at California community colleges and public universities and at all other institutions of higher education.

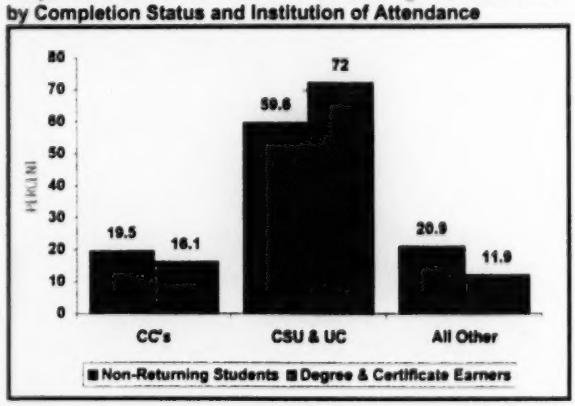
Chart 4
Proportions of Former Students Continuing Their Education by Classification Status and Institution of Attendance



DO GRADUATES CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION IN LARGER NUMBERS THAN NON-RETURNING STUDENTS?

Though fewer non-returning students continue their education than degree and certificate earners, a substantial number do continue. Approximately 32% of the non-returners and 54% of the degree and certificate earners are enrolled. Chart 5 below displays the proportions of former students who continue their education at California community colleges and public universities and at all other institutions of higher education.

Chart 5
Proportions of Former Students Continuing Their Education by Completion Status and Institution of Attendance



DO FORMER STUDENTS WHO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION FEEL WELL-PREPARED TO DO SO?

As a group, transfer students rate their Los Rios preparation to continue their education fairly high. On a five-point scale, where one equals "preparation was excellent" and five equals "preparation was inadequate," the average rating was 2.0. Almost 76% of all students who have continued their education rate it as satisfactory or excellent.

This holds true across gender. Seventy-seven percent of the women who have continued their education rate their Los Rios preparation as satisfactory or excellent and 74% of men do, as well.

There is a significant relationship between age and student rating of preparation for transfer. Fewer younger students (ages 16-20) rate their preparation to transfer as satisfactory or excellent (68%). All other age groups had proportions of 75% or greater.

Likewise, approximately three-fourths of the occupational education and general program majors rate their preparation as satisfactory or excellent, as do three-fourths of both the non-returning students and those who completed their programs of study earning degrees and certificates.

There is, however, a significant relationship between student opinions about preparation for transfer and their ethnicity. More former students of Asian descent rate their preparation for transfer as inadequate or average than those of other ethnic groups. Approximately 36% of the Asian students evaluate the preparation they received at Los Rios as average or inadequate, as opposed to 21% of the former students who are white and 22% of all other ethnic minority groups. This finding is similar to a finding in Report #1 of this series -- significantly more Asian students evaluate their overall satisfaction with their educational experience at Los Rios as average or disappointing than do students of other ethnic backgrounds.

DID STUDENTS HAVE PROBLEMS WHEN THEY TRANSFERRED?

Most respondents reported that they had no problems in transferring; only 11% of those who transferred said they had. Issues mentioned were transferring units and transcript problems.

There is, however, a significant relationship between the rating of preparation to transfer and problems occurring when students tried to transfer. Those students who had problems transferring to their new institutions of higher education tend to evaluate their preparation as only average or as inadequate rather than as satisfactory or excellent.

OTHER POINTS ABOUT FORMER STUDENTS WHO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION

Among respondents who reported academic majors at their transfer institutions, there are four majors with the largest proportions of students: business, management and economics (21%); social and behavioral sciences (17%); health, health-related professions and life sciences (14%) and English, humanities and fine arts (9%).

A large majority of those who transferred are enrolled as full-time students. Only 28% are enrolled part-time.

One final point of interest is related to those former students who are employed. There is a significant relationship between the type of jobs in which former students are employed and whether they continue their education. The majority of former students who are working *and* continuing their education tend to be doing so in fields unrelated to their Los Rios programs of study. Only 37% of those students who are working and going to school are working in fields related to their Los Rios programs of study. Conversely, well over half (59%) of those students who chose *not* to continue their education are working in fields related to their programs of study. It may be that students who go on to further their education either seek jobs in fields that pay them adequately to support themselves through school or seek jobs that provide flexibility related to hours worked for academic schedule planning, rather than seeking jobs to gain experience in fields related to their studies.

Technical Note: When "significant relationships" are noted in the text of this report, the Chi Square Test for Independence was used. In all reported instances relationships are statistically significant at the .001 level. Therefore, there is an extremely high probability that significant relationships represent true relationships between variables in the former student population and are not the result of sampling error. Other proportions reported in this study cannot necessarily be generalized to the entire 1993-94 former student population. They are, however, representative of the 38.8% who responded to the survey.

This report was written by Judith Beachler and is based on research conducted by the 1995 Project Follow-up staff: research design, analysis and report writing – Judith Beachler, Research Analyst; research design, computer programming, database development and management – Jose Pagtalunan, former Programmer Analyst; coordination of return mail processes, data entry and production of Volume I reports – Verna Puglisi, Secretary. Questions regarding this project should be directed to the LRCCD Office of Planning and Research, Carol R. McKenzie, Ph.D., Director. Call 916-563-3247 or e-mail - puglisv@mail.do.losrios.cc.ca.us transfer.doc

Los Rios Community College District
Office of Planning and Research

A PROFILE OF FORMER LRCCD STUDENTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED

MEASURES OF PROGRESS: 1995 PROJECT FOLLOW-UP
RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF 1993-94 GRADUATES AND NON-RETURNING STUDENTS

Report #3, Volume II
July 1996

From the Spring through the early Summer of 1995 the Los Rios Community College District conducted its biennial student follow-up survey, the eighth in a series that now covers a span of twelve years. During this twelve year period, data were generated from the responses of over 17,000 former students. After adjusting for undeliverable mail, the 1995 survey population included 6,151 former students who had attended one of the district's three colleges -- American River College (ARC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), and Sacramento City College (SCC) during the 1993-94 academic year. Questionnaires were sent to all degree and certificate earners (including those from summer session) and to a stratified random sample of non-returning students who had not graduated. Non-returning students were stratified by college; within each college they were stratified by gender and ethnicity. Responses from 2,389 individuals (for a rate of return of 38.8%) have been analyzed in an effort to answer the following questions of interest in educational planning:

- What happens to our students after they leave their Los Rios college? Were their educational goals completed? If not, why did they leave? Did the program and services offered by the colleges meet their individual educational needs? Do they plan to return to Los Rios in the future?
- What is their current educational status? Are they continuing their education elsewhere? Do they feel well prepared to do so?
- Are they employed? Where are they working and how much do they earn? Are they working in fields related to their college educational programs? Do they feel well prepared for employment?

Volume I of this study described the former student population and their responses to the survey questions. Data were generated at the district, college and academic program levels.

Volume II of this study is a series of short reports that provide more detailed analysis of data provided by survey respondents. These reports summarize the characteristics of specific student groups and the influence these characteristics have on: (1) the levels of overall satisfaction with their Los Rios college education; (2) their opinions regarding the usefulness of their education in preparing them to transfer to other colleges and universities; and (3) their opinions regarding the relevancy of their education in performing their jobs, with a complementary review of salary and wage data provided by former students. A fourth report summarizes the survey returns by non-returning students and by degree and certificate earners. It also summarizes the demography of the survey population and compares it to the 1993-94 former student population from which it was drawn.

The following report presents a demographic profile of former students who are employed, summarizes their opinions regarding how useful their education is to them in performing their jobs and reviews the salaries and part-time wages that they command.

HOW MANY FORMER STUDENTS ARE EMPLOYED?

Exactly 75% of the 1993-94 students who responded to the 1995 Follow-up Survey are employed, up from 73% who were surveyed in 1993. Of those who are employed, approximately 66% are working full-time (40 hours per week) and 34% are working part-time. Those who are working part-time are working an average of 23 hours per week.

Of those employed, 93% are employed in the four-county Sacramento Metropolitan Statistical Area, up by 2% over the 1993 figures. Slightly more than half (52%) were employed in their occupational fields *prior* to enrolling at a Los Rios college.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF FORMER STUDENTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED

Significantly more older former students are employed than those who are younger; approximately three-fourths or more of former students in all age groups 21 and over are employed, but only 65% of those under 21 are.

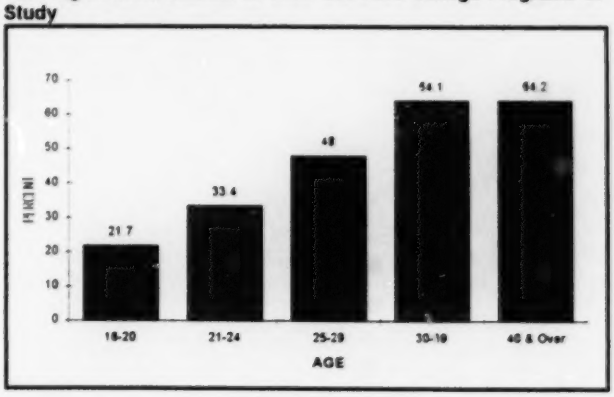
Similarly, three-fourths of former Native American, Latino and white students are employed, while slightly fewer (72%) of the former African American students are, and 67% of the former Asian students are. Higher proportions of these two ethnic groups are seeking employment (14% of each vs. 9% or less for all other ethnic groups).

More men than women are employed (78% vs. 74%). Eighteen percent of the women are not seeking employment, while only 13% of the men are not.

Slightly more than half of the former students who responded to the survey are employed in fields that are either directly or closely related to their college program of study. This holds true across ethnic groups, with the exception of Asians and Latinos; only 44% of the Asian students are working in fields related to their programs of study, while slightly less than half of the Latino students are. More women than men are working in fields related to their programs of study: 53% vs. 48%.

There is a significant relationship between age and whether a former student is working in a field related to his or her Los Rios college program of study. Younger students who are employed tend to be working in larger numbers in fields that are *unrelated* to their programs of study, while older students tend to work in larger numbers in fields that are *related* to their programs of study, as pointed out in Chart 1. This finding coincides with two findings in Report #2 of this series. Younger former students tend to continue their education in larger numbers than older students. In addition, former students who are working and continuing their education tend to do so in fields unrelated to their Los Rios programs of study. These findings suggests that older students, who are less likely to continue their education than younger students, are more focused on obtaining or upgrading job skills when they attend their Los Rios community college.

Chart 1
Proportion of Former Students in Each Age Category Who Are Working in Jobs Related to Their Los Rios College Programs of Study



There is a significant relationship between student goals at Los Rios and employment. As might be expected, survey respondents who stated that their primary objective or goal while attending a Los Rios college was career or job-related are working in larger numbers than former students with a primary objective to transfer or those wrote in "other" objectives.

CLASSIFICATION STATUS AND COMPLETION STATUS OF FORMER STUDENTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED

There is no significant difference in the proportions of former occupational education and general program majors who are employed: 72% of all former general program majors are employed, while 79% of all occupational education majors are. Exactly 8.4% of both groups are unemployed and seeking employment. Twenty percent of former students majoring in general education programs are not seeking employment, while 12% of the former occupational education students are not; the higher proportion of general program majors who are not seeking employment is indicative of the larger proportion of these students who focus exclusively on transfer.

Likewise, there is no proportional difference in those former students who are employed, based on completion status: 76% of the non-returning students and the degree/certificate earners are employed, 8% of both are unemployed and seeking employment and 16% of both are not seeking employment.

IS THEIR LOS RIOS COLLEGE EDUCATION USEFUL TO FORMER STUDENTS IN PERFORMING THEIR JOBS?

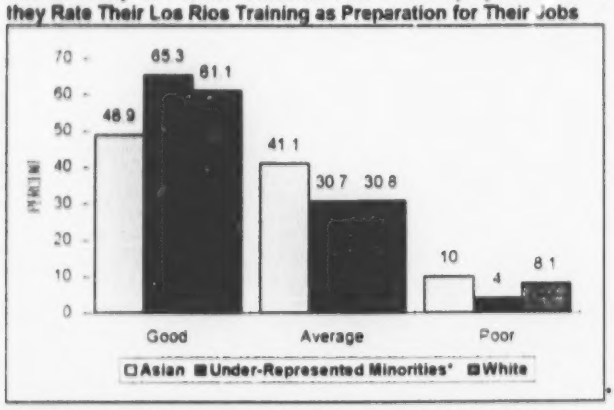
The majority of former students who are employed believe that their Los Rios college education was useful. When asked to rate their training related to usefulness in performing their jobs, exactly 60% stated that the training was good or very good, 32% stated that it was average and 8% stated that it was poor or very poor.

As might be expected, significantly more former students working in fields related to their program of study rated their training as good or very good (73%). Only 39% of those employed in fields that are unrelated to their programs of study rated the usefulness of their training as good or very good, while 48% rated it as average.

Large numbers of program completers (degree and certificate earners) *and* non-returning students rated preparation for employment as good or very good, at 64% and 55%, respectively. Large numbers of former students employed in their occupations prior to attending a Los Rios college, as well as those employed since then, rated their experience as good and very good in similar proportions: 61% and 59%, respectively.

There is a significant relationship between ethnicity and opinions about the usefulness of training to perform jobs. Compared to than whites and members of other ethnic minority groups, fewer former Asian students who are employed rated their Los Rios college education as good or very good in relation to its usefulness to them in performing their jobs, as pointed out in Chart 3. Between 64% and 70% of former African American, Native American and Latino students rated their training as good or very good preparation for employment.

Chart 4
The Ethnicity of Former Students Who Are Employed and How they Rate Their Los Rios Training as Preparation for Their Jobs



African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans are considered as under-represented in higher education.

Almost two-thirds (60%) of both men and women rated the usefulness of their training to their jobs as good or very good. Significantly more older former students who are employed evaluated their training as good or very good than did younger ones. Slightly more than 68% of those 30-39 rated it as good or very good, while almost 73% of those 40 and over did. This contrasts with only 37% of those 16 to 20 and 44% of those 21 to 24. Almost 59% of those former students between 25 and 29 who are employed rated the preparation to perform their jobs as good or very good.

WHAT SALARIES AND WAGES DO FORMER LOS RIOS COLLEGE STUDENTS COMMAND?

Full-time Salaried Employees

Of all the former students who are employed, 66% are working full-time at an average annual salary of $29,990. Although the average salary for all those employed full-time is $29,990, those employed full-time in fields *related* to their majors make a higher salary ($31,506), while those employed in *unrelated* fields make less ($28,201).

Students who completed their programs of study command average salaries that are slightly higher (4%) than those who did not. The average salary of degree and certificate earners is $30,137 and $30,015 for non-returning students.

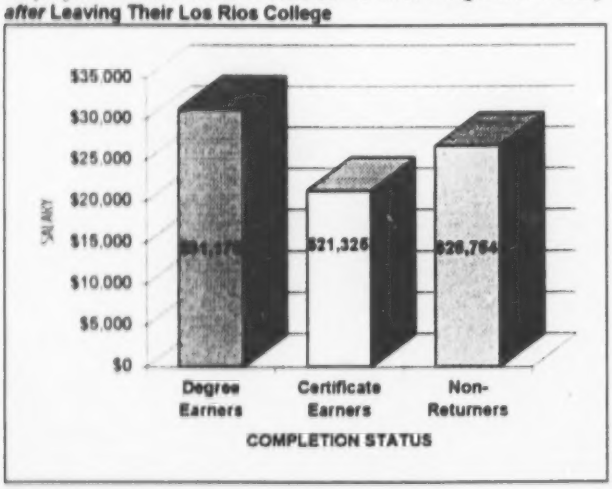
Of those students who completed their programs of study and are actually working in fields related to their education, degree earners are making 19% higher salaries than certificate earners. Degree earners average a salary of $31,920 while certificate earners average $26,861.

Occupational education majors earned an average salary of $31,452 which is approximately 14% higher than the $27,563 average salary of general program majors. But many were employed prior to matriculating as Los Rios students. Of interest, then, is the question of salaries of former Los Rios students who gain employment *after* they leave, particularly those who work in fields related to their programs of study.

Of the occupational education students who did not gain employment in fields related to their programs of study until *after* leaving their Los Rios college, those who earned degrees command the highest average salary, at $31,176; conversely, occupational education certificate earners gaining employment in fields related to their programs of study *after* earning their certificates, command average salaries that are approximately $10,000 less, at $21,325. On average, non-returning

occupational education students who gained employment in fields related to their programs of study *after* they left their Los Rios college, earn more than certificate earners, as well, as indicated in Chart 4; perhaps reasonable starting salaries lure some of these students from their programs of study. Still, on average, degree earners command starting salaries that are 17% higher than those of non-returning students.

Chart 4
Average Salaries of Former Occupational Education Students Employed Full-time in Fields Related to Their Programs of Study *after* Leaving Their Los Rios College



Employees Earning Part-Time Wages

Thirty-four percent of all former students who are employed are working part-time at an average hourly wage of $12.31. Those employed part-time in fields related to their courses of study make slightly less ($12.10), while those working in fields unrelated to the courses they took earn slightly more ($12.51).

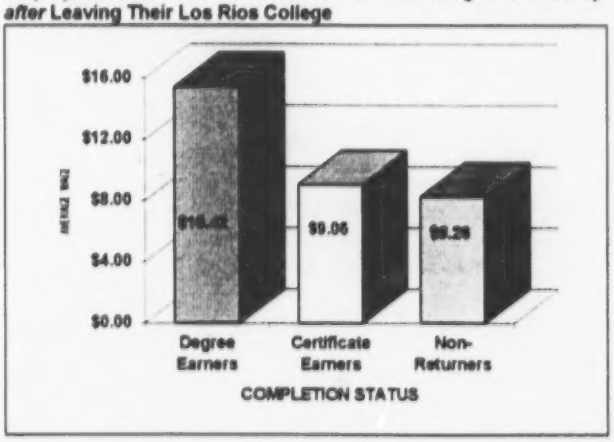
On average, former part-time students who were non-returners make higher wages than those who completed their programs earning a degree or certificate: $16.55 vs. $10.21. However, the $16.55 average for *all* non-returning students is strongly influenced by the very high average wages earned by non-returners who are working in fields unrelated to the course or courses they took at Los Rios. These students, who were pursuing non-job-related goals, earn an average wage of $30.68. Approximately 30% of all individuals working part-time were non-returners and 70% completed their programs earning degrees or certificates.

On average, former students who complete their programs of study earning degrees command part-time wages that are 10% higher than those students who completed their programs earning certificates. Average wages for these two groups are $10.32 and $9.35, respectively.

Occupational education majors earn an average wage of $14.11 which is approximately 30% higher than the $10.82 average wage earned by general program majors. Forty-five percent of the former student population that works part-time majored in occupational education programs and 55% majored in general programs.

Of the occupational education students who did not gain part-time employment in fields related to their programs of study until *after* leaving their Los Rios colleges, degree earners make the highest wages, as outlined in Chart 5. Those who earned degrees command wages that are 70% higher than those who earned certificate and 87% higher than those of non-returning students.

Chart 5
Average Wages of Former Occupational Education Students Employed Part-time in Fields Related to Their Programs of Study *after* Leaving Their Los Rios College



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This report was written by Judith Beachler and is based on research conducted by the 1995 Project Follow-up staff: research design, analysis and report writing – Judith Beachler, Research Analyst; research design, computer programming, database development and management – Jose Pagtalunan, former Programmer Analyst; coordination of return mail processes, data entry and production of Volume I reports – Verna Puglisi, Secretary. Questions regarding this project should be directed to the LRCCD Office of Planning and Research 916-563-3247 or e-mail - puglisv@mail.do.losnos.cc.ca.us

Los Rios Community College District
Office of Planning and Research

A PROFILE OF THE FORMER LRCCD STUDENT SURVEY POPULATION

MEASURES OF PROGRESS: 1995 PROJECT FOLLOW-UP
RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF 1993-94 GRADUATES AND NON-RETURNING STUDENTS

Report #4, Volume II

July 1996

From the Spring through the early Summer of 1995 the Los Rios Community College District conducted its biennial student follow-up survey, the eighth in a series that now covers a span of twelve years. During this twelve year period, data were generated from the responses of over 17,000 former students. After adjusting for undeliverable mail, the 1995 survey population included 6,151 former students who had attended one of the district's three colleges -- American River College (ARC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), and Sacramento City College (SCC) during the 1993-94 academic year. Questionnaires were sent to all degree and certificate earners (including those from summer session) and to a stratified random sample of non-returning students who had not graduated. Non-returning students were stratified by college; within each college they were stratified by gender and ethnicity. Responses from 2,389 individuals (for a rate of return of 38.8%) have been analyzed in an effort to answer the following questions of interest in educational planning:

- What happens to our students after they leave their Los Rios college? Were their educational goals completed? If not, why did they leave? Did the program and services offered by the colleges meet their individual educational needs? Do they plan to return to Los Rios in the future?

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This final report summarizes the survey returns by non-returning students and by degree and certificate earners. It also summarizes the demography of the survey population and compares it to the 1993-94 former student population from which it was drawn. Its purpose is to bring perspective to the findings of the other three reports in this series, based upon the demographic populations from which the samples were drawn.

The 1995 Survey Population and Survey Returns

The 1995 survey questionnaires were sent to a total of 7,294 former students who attended a Los Rios college during the 1993-94 academic year. *All* degree and certificate earners were mailed questionnaires. A stratified random sample of non-returning students also received surveys. Table 1 summarizes the number of surveys returned, broken down by degree recipients, certificate earners and non- returning students within the district and by college.

Table 1: 1995 Survey Population and Rate of Return

Survey Population	ARC	CRC	SCC	LRCCD	
Degree Recipients	936	402	760	2,098	
Certificate Earners	192	91	113	396	
Non-Returners	2,002	1,118	1,680	4,800	
Total	3,130	1,611	2,553	7,294	
Undeliverable Mail	452	213	478	1,143	
(% undeliverable)	14.4%	13.2%	18.7%	15.7%	
Adjusted Total	2,678	1,398	2,075	6,151	
Number of Respondents					**Adjusted Response Rate for the District**
Degree Recipients	514	226	370	1,110	57.9%
Certificate Earners	107	51	45	203	54.4%
Non-Returners	475	253	348	1,076	27.9%
Total	1,096	530	763	2,389	38.8%
Adjusted Response Rate	40.9%	37.9%	36.8%	38.8%	

The rates of response for degree and certificate earners district-wide are quite high at 57.9% and 54.4%, respectively. The *overall* response rate is 38.8%, down from an overall rate of return of 42.9% in 1993. This occurred primarily because of an increase in the number of non-returning students who were mailed survey questionnaires in 1995, causing the proportions of this population to be higher. Non-returners are less likely to complete survey forms than those who have completed a program of study. Only 28% of the non-returners responded.

Interestingly, the proportion of surveys returned by program completers (those former students who earned degrees and certificates) in 1995 increased over the 1993 levels, while it decreased for non-returners. The rate of return for degree and certificate earners was 46.5% in 1993 and 52.6% in 1995; the comparable percents for non-returners were 30.6% and 22.4%, respectively. These percentages represent the overall rates of return *without* controlling for undeliverable mail, as was done in Table 1 above. Although rates of return were affected by the larger proportion of surveys that were mailed to non-returners in 1995, it may also have declined as a result of a more stringent policy established by the U.S. Postal Service regarding the forwarding of mail. Although in past years mail was forwarded for one year to individuals who moved, in 1995 the Postal Service was only forwarding mail for four months. It is likely that this was a contributing factor to the slightly lower overall response rate.

Demographic Comparison:
Survey Respondents to the Fall 1993 Enrollment Population

The random sample of non-returning students who received questionnaires was stratified by college; at the college level, samples were stratified by gender and ethnicity. These samples were merged with the file of all 1993-94 degree and certificate earners; all were mailed surveys. Because of this, the proportions of students by gender and ethnicity in the *original* sample are almost identical to those in the total enrollment population; however, ethnicity of the actual survey respondents varies. Table 2 outlines the gender and ethnicity of the total student population in Fall 1993, the gender and ethnicity of the survey population that was mailed questionnaires and the gender and ethnicity of the respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Comparison of the Student Population to the 1995 Survey Population by the Criteria Selected for Stratification

	Total Fall Enrollment	Survey Population	
		Original Sample	Respondents
	N = 48,612	N = 7,294	N = 2,389
Gender	**Percent**	**Percent**	**Percent**
Female	57.4	56.2	64.3
Male	42.6	43.8	35.7
Ethnic Group			
African American	9.9	9.3	5.8
Asian	16.0	15.2	14.5
Latino	11.3	10.7	8.4
Native American	2.2	2.2	1.8
White	57.0	58.4	65.9
Other	3.4	4.0	3.5
Unknown	0.2	0.2	0.2

Note: Percents may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 2 shows that in some instances the proportions of students responding to the survey are substantially different than the proportion in the total Fall 1993 student population and in the original sample. The proportions of females and whites who responded are larger than the proportions in the total student population, while the proportion of African Americans who responded is lower than that of the total student population. As such, interpreting results of the research based on these criteria should be done with caution. Findings related to these three groups may not necessarily be representative of the entire student populations of these demographic groups.

Likewise, the proportions vary for certain age groups, as pointed out in Table 3. The proportions of older students who responded (age 30 and over) are higher than in the total student population, while the proportions of former students who responded in age groups under 25 are lower.

Table 3: Comparison of the Student Population to the 1995 Survey Population by Age

	Total Fall Enrollment N = 48,612	Survey Population Original Sample N = 7,294	Survey Population Respondents N = 2,389
Age Group	**Percent**	**Percent**	**Percent**
16-20	29.4	15.3	9.2
21-24	20.3	25.2	24.4
25-29	16.9	18.3	16.6
30-39	19.9	24.1	27.5
40 & over	13.4	17.3	22.3

Note: Percents may not add to 100 due to rounding.

This report was written by Judith Beachler and is based on research conducted by the 1995 Project Follow-up staff: research design, analysis and report writing – Judith Beachler, Research Analyst; research design, computer programming, database development and management – Jose Pagtalunan, former Programmer Analyst; coordination of return mail processes, data entry and production of Volume I reports – Verna Puglisi, Secretary. Questions regarding this project should be directed to the LRCCD Office of Planning and Research. 916-563-3247 or e-mail - puglisv@mail.do.losrios.cc.ca.us

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